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Trades Union Congress

The attack upon trade
unionism

London

[1923?]

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THE ATTACK
UPON
TRADE UNIONISM

PRICE SIXPENCE

PUBLISHED BY
THE TRADES UNION CONGRESS
AND

THE LABOUR PARTY

25, ABINGDON SQUARE, LONDON, S.W.1

The Attack upon Trade Unionism

THE professing friends of Trade Unionism are exceedingly busy to-day in propounding measures and statements which are designed effectively to deprive the Trade Union Movement of all power. The times are indeed exceptionally favourable to such activity, in view of the depletion of Trade Union funds, the great reductions in wages and the inroads upon Trade Union membership, which the present state of trade has created. It has long been recognised that in periods of bad trade, it is from the political rather than the industrial side of the Labour Movement that the forces of reaction have most to fear. Recent by-elections have well illustrated the strength of Labour's political forces. It is not, therefore, surprising to find that Sir George Younger, M.P. (the organising power behind the Unionist forces of the Coalition), and his fellow sponsors of the Trade Union Act (1913) Amendment Bill, aided and abetted by the *Morning Post*, are seeking to restrict the political activity of the Trade Union Movement.

THE PROFESSING FRIENDS OF TRADE UNIONISM

The authors of the present attacks on Trade Union political action are loud in their protestations of friendship towards a Movement for whose welfare they have assumed an unsolicited responsibility. Lieut.-Col. Meysey-Thompson, in introducing the Trade Union Act Amendment Bill, opened his speech with the following words: "I wish to make it perfectly clear that this is not in any sense an attack upon Trade Unions. On the contrary, I think it will strengthen and improve the position of Trade Unions, by removing a very great cause of friction with regard to the political action which they have been accustomed to take."* Trade Unionists may be struck by the resemblance of these words to those used by the opponents of the Trade Union Act at the time that it was passed, when Trade Unions were to some extent relieved of the impossible restrictions imposed upon them as the result of the Osborne Judgment. Thus in July, 1912, Mr. Basil Peto urged the rejection of the 1913 Bill "from the public point of view, from the Trade Union point of view, from the point of view of the free exercise of the rights of citizenship of every man, free from intimidation or the possibility of anything of the kind."†

Meanwhile the *Morning Post* has no less vigorously taken up the cudgels in a series of articles reprinted as a pamphlet under the heading "Trade Union Extravagance." These articles contain a double attack—first, an attack upon Trade Union finance and, second, a challenge to the political activities of the Trade Union Movement, in close sympathy with the Trade Union Act Amendment Bill. These articles also, we are asked to believe, are inspired by the intensity of the *Morning Post's* interest in the true welfare of Trade Unionism. The pamphlet, which, as will appear below, is full of the grossest misrepresentations and perversions of the facts, contains the following paragraph, printed in black type:—

NO ENMITY TO TRADE UNIONS

In giving publicity to the above facts and comments, the *Morning Post* wishes to make it quite clear that no hostility is intended to Trade Unions. The value of Trade Unions, when properly conducted, to the life of the community is recognised. It is the abuse of Trade Unions and their funds for revolutionary and political purposes that is criticised.

* *Hansard*, May 19, 1922, col. 689.

† *Hansard*, vol. xli of 1912, col. 3009.

It is the object of this pamphlet to expose the true meaning of these professions of friendship and the falsifications upon which they are based. A careful examination of the facts, figures and proposals of these professing friends of Trade Unionism will sufficiently reveal the true character of their hostility to the Labour Movement in all its forms. Their friendship is judged by their actions.

I

THE TRADE UNION ACT (1913) AMENDMENT BILL THE PROVISIONS OF THE BILL

The object of the Trade Union Act Amendment Bill is quite simple. It seeks to make much more burdensome the already severe restrictions upon the political activity of Trade Unions. It intends to make it impossibly difficult for Trade Unions to take part in politics. Now that every by-election makes more plain the political strength of Labour, it is quite easy to understand the motive of this Bill. It is a direct tack, masquerading as a friendly overture, upon Labour politics by Labour's political adversaries.

In its original form, in which it passed its Second Reading in the House of Commons and received the votes of the gentlemen whose names are set out below, the Bill contained two main provisions. First, it sought to place obstacles in the way of the establishment of a political fund by any Trade Union; and, second, it sought to prevent members of a Union which has established a political fund from contributing to that fund.

As the law now stands, a Union may establish a political fund provided that a ballot has previously been taken on the question, and that the proposal has been approved by a majority of the members voting. The present Bill, in its original form, proposed that it should be necessary for the establishment of a political fund to be sanctioned by a ballot in which the votes of at least 50% of the members are recorded and in which a 20% majority in favour of a political fund is obtained.

Under the present law, in Unions which have a political fund, a member who does not wish to contribute to that fund may claim exemption on a simple form specified for the purpose. It is interesting to note that Conservative interests have, upon their own admission, made excellent use of their opportunities for exploiting to the full the present facilities for claiming exemption. Sir George Younger, in the House of Commons, stated that a "Labour organisation" which he had started had printed 1,300,000 copies of these exemption forms, of which 250,000 had been used.*

The Trade Union Act Amendment Bill proposes to relieve Sir George Younger and his friends of this trouble and expense. If this Bill becomes law the present situation will be reversed. Although the establishment of any political fund at all will require the sanction of a ballot, it will be further necessary for every individual Trade Union member to signify in writing his willingness to contribute to the political fund, and to renew his consent annually.

So outrageous are these proposals that the Bill as it emerged from a Standing Committee of the House has been somewhat modified. The principal alteration has been the withdrawal of the stringent requirements as to the majority which could sanction the establishment of a political fund. In its present form the Bill allows a political fund to be established by a simple majority of the members voting at a ballot, as under the present law. The provision, however, that even after the majority have expressed approval of political activity by ballot, each individual member of that majority must still state in writing his willingness to contribute to the political fund and renew his statement yearly still remains part of the Bill.

* *Hansard*, May 19, 1922, col. 707.

THE GOVERNMENT AND THE TRADE UNION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

The Trade Union Act Amendment Bill is not a Government measure. Officially the Government has no attitude towards it. During the Debate on the Second Reading of the Bill no member of the Government spoke on either side. But the following facts from the division on the Second Reading speak for themselves. There voted in favour of the Bill:—

Mr. STANLEY BALDWIN, President of the Board of Trade.
Commander B. M. EYRES-MOUNSELL, Civil Lord of the Admiralty.
Mr. W. C. BRIDGMAN, Secretary for Mines.
Major G. C. TRYON, Parliamentary Secretary of the Ministry of Pensions.
Sir ERNEST MURRAY POLLOCK, Solicitor-General.
Mr. H. PIKE-PEASE, Assistant Postmaster-General.
Col. LESLIE WILSON, Joint Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury.
Lieut.-Col. Sir JOHN GILMOUR, Lord Commissioner of the Treasury.
Mr. JAMES PARKER, Lord Commissioner of the Treasury.
Rev. J. TOWYN JONES, Lord Commissioner of the Treasury (since resigned).
Major Hon. G. F. STANLEY, Financial Secretary to the War Office.
Col. GEORGE A. GIBBS, Treasurer of the Household.
Major H. BARNSTON, Comptroller of the Household.

No member of the Government voted against the Bill. While officially the Government may have expressed no opinion on the merits of the Bill, it is evident what is the attitude of individual members of the Government towards it.

Conservative and Coalition members of the Government and of the House of Commons do not set much store by the virtue of consistency. Perhaps they have short memories. But it can hardly be supposed that Mr. Lloyd George and his colleagues are so completely oblivious of, or indifferent to, their past attitude on this question that they will be prepared to give time in the Autumn Session for this preposterous measure to be proceeded with. For in 1912-13 when the Trade Union Act, which the present Bill seeks to amend, was under discussion, the attitude of members of the present Government was one of uncompromising hostility to any measure framed on the lines of the Bill of to-day. In the Committee stage of the 1913 Bill an amendment was proposed which would require members willing to contribute to the political fund to express their consent, whilst the political objector was relieved of the necessity of taking any action. That amendment in effect would have made the 1913 Act exactly the same as the 1922 Bill in its amended form, except that even then the earlier measure would have been less stringent, inasmuch as it would not have required an annual renewal of consent to the political funds. Amongst those who voted against that Amendment were:—

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE
Mr. CHURCHILL
Dr. MACNAMARA
Mr. McKENNA
Mr. SHORT
Major GUEST
The Hon. F. E. GUEST

Ten years ago, therefore, these gentlemen regarded even a milder measure of coercion of Trade Unions than the present as objectionable. Ten years ago Mr. Bonar Law himself said of the Trade Union Act, which it is now proposed to amend,

"I should like to say a few words about the Bill before it leaves the House. As regards the general principle there has not been from the first any dispute. I think everyone in all quarters of the House recognises that the Osborne Judgment left Trade Unions in an invidious and, I think, unfair position. They ought to have been able, if they wished, to carry on political action under fair conditions."*

Moreover, ten years ago, when the Trade Union Act was passed to reverse the impossible restrictions which the Osborne Judgment had laid upon Trade Unions, it appeared to be so obviously just a measure of redress that there was no division upon the Third Reading. If, therefore, any member of the present House, who was a member in January, 1913 (and there are many such), supports the Trade Union Act Amendment Bill, he must either confess to a change of policy or be guilty of gross inconsistency.

It may be useful to recall the above facts to the minds of the gentlemen concerned.

WHAT THE BILL WOULD MEAN FOR THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

It is evident that this Bill expresses recognition of the fact that it is the political aspect of the Labour Movement which is to-day especially to be feared. Equally evident is it that the contention that the Bill is designed to protect individual liberty is a mere pretence. Trade Unions already have to submit to a degree of restriction upon their political activity which is not required of any other organisation, not excluding those whose *raison d'être* is the exact negation of everything for which Trade Unionism stands. The Federation of British Industries—the most powerful capitalist organisation in this country—is not required to ballot its members before using money for political purposes. As was very logically pointed out in the debate upon the Second Reading of the Bill, the supporters of the Bill ought, if they value consistency, to be equally insistent in the name of liberty that such organisations as the Reconstruction Society (late Anti-Socialist Society), the People's League, the National Constitutional Defence Movement, the National Citizens' Union (formerly Middle Classes Union) and the British Commonwealth Union should be required to ballot their members before using money for political purposes, to keep their political funds distinct from other forms of expenditure, and to submit their balance sheets in a prescribed form to the Registrar of Friendly Societies. Instead of recognising that Trade Unions are already subject to peculiar disabilities in respect of their political activities, the Bill proposes actually to add to the burden of those disabilities. It is, indeed, a one-sided kind of liberty and equality to which the supporters of the Bill appeal in their efforts to increase the existing discrepancy between the political freedom of Trade Unions and of other organisations.

Moreover, the existing law amply safeguards the liberty of the individual Trade Unionist who desires to be exempt from contribution to the political fund of his Union. A member must be warned that a ballot has taken place; he must have a copy of the rules of his Union from which he may learn exactly how and for what purposes his contributions are being used. Should he differ politically from the majority of the members of his Union, by whose votes the political fund was established, he has only to sign and return the exemption form to ensure that not a penny of his money is used for political objects of which he disapproves.† Further, it is admitted that, where the

* *Hansard*, January 31, 1913, col. 1680.

† There seems to be no limit to the extent to which misrepresentations of the present position will be carried by the opponents of Labour. Thus, the *Morning Post*, in a leading article on June 26, 1922, refers to "the Bill now in Parliament, providing that Trade Union funds cannot be used for political purposes without the consent of their members," as though Trade Unions were not already prevented from so using their funds under the existing law. Similarly the Rt. Hon. J. M. Robertson actually stated in a pamphlet entitled *Liberalism and Labour*, and published by the Liberal Publication Department, that "Labour obtains its political funds by compulsory levies."

attention of responsible Trade Union officials has been directed to cases in which difficulty in obtaining the necessary forms of exemption has been experienced, full redress has been made.

Finally, the Trade Union Act Amendment Bill proposes to introduce, in the single instance of the political activity of Trade Unions, a departure from a form of procedure against which in no other case is complaint raised. The supporters of the Bill accept without demur the passing of the Acts of Parliament which impose implicit acceptance of certain contracts upon millions of people in this country. In all such legislation provision is made not for contracting-in as is proposed by the Trade Union Act Amendment Bill, but for contracting-out, for, indeed, "that is the only basis upon which the House of Commons could proceed."* It is equally the only basis upon which Trade Unions can proceed. Moreover, the absurdity is intensified by the fact that under the existing rules as to ballots a majority vote must already have been obtained in favour of the establishment of a political fund before any such fund is established at all. The Bill, therefore, proposes to institute a procedure, as ridiculous as it is iniquitous, by which the majority will be required to contract-in to a fund of which they have already expressed their approval by ballot. The professing democrats who have introduced this Bill have certainly evolved a remarkable interpretation of democracy, according to which the views of the minority are to be treated as the normal and those of the majority as the exception.

The Trade Union Act requires no amendment in the interests of the political objector. It is as true to-day as it was ten years ago, that the Act "provides for Trade Unions doing what they have a perfect right to do, namely, to spend money on political purposes."† It "prevents compulsion; it gives a man the right of exemption; it also takes care that where there is a ballot there shall be secrecy; that there shall be the right to vote given to every member, and a fair and reasonable opportunity of voting. . . . It in no way imposes on them (the political objectors) the obligation to pay a penny."‡

II

THE ATTACK ON TRADE UNION FINANCE

The attack on Trade Union finance is contained in a series of articles reprinted from the *Morning Post* to which reference has already been made. These articles have undoubtedly had a considerable circulation, and references to the subject are still frequently made in the columns of the *Morning Post*.

MANAGEMENT EXPENSES

The first proposition that the *Morning Post* pamphlet sets out to prove is that the "Management Expenses" of Trade Unions both absorb an excessive proportion of their total funds, and increased inordinately between the years 1918 and 1920 (which the *Morning Post* has selected without any reference to the peculiar circumstances of the time). It is apparent that the *Morning Post* regards a Trade Union as an inferior form of Friendly Society, whose only legitimate purpose is to provide weekly benefits to its members during periods of sickness, unemployment, and also, it must reluctantly be admitted, during periods of idleness occasioned by trade disputes. Instead, however, of performing this work, Trade Unions have, in the *Morning Post's* view, become in an increasing degree organisations for the expenditure of working-class savings in futile delegations, conferences, salaries of officials, office expenses and politics.

* Mr. W. Graham in the House of Commons (May 19, 1922).

† Lord Robert Cecil in the House of Commons (January 31, 1913).

‡ Sir Rufus Isaacs in the House of Commons (January 31, 1913).

We read, "From 1914 to 1920 the Trade Unions have enjoyed 'boom' years. With the assistance in various ways of the Government they have been able enormously to increase their membership; there was never any necessity for strikes, since all reasonable demands (and some that were not reasonable) were granted for the asking; and—until a series of political-revolutionary strikes broke the trade prosperity—there was practically no unemployment."* Consequently, we learn that members "who are turning to their Trade Unions for help during the present hard times are finding in many cases that their appeals are in vain," for "funds are exhausted."

We have not space here to enter into a controversy with the *Morning Post* as to the meaning of the term "reasonable demands," or as to the causes of the trade depression. We may, however, suggest that that journal should bring forward some specific evidence:—

- (1) To prove that all reasonable demands were granted for the asking during the war;
- (2) To prove the "political-revolutionary" character of the strikes to which reference is made; and
- (3) To illustrate the direct connection between these strikes and the break in trade prosperity.

THE "MORNING POST" FIGURES IN REGARD TO MANAGEMENT EXPENSES

The *Morning Post* has published a table showing the membership, income from members, political fund expenditure, expenditure upon benefits and management expenses of thirty Trade Unions. "One fact," the pamphlet reads, "stands out from these figures—the enormous increase in management expenses." It is pointed out that this amounts in some cases to over 100 per cent. It is further stated that the figures are in every case "taken from the official statements and balance sheets of Trade Unions"; and that the Unions examined have been selected "at random to represent every type," since "it would not have been fair to make a selection of the notorious extremist-dominated Unions."[†]

INACCURACY IN THE FIGURES

In the first place it is difficult to understand exactly how the *Morning Post* has arrived at some of the figures contained in the table, from a study of "the official statements of Trade Unions." The figures for 1918 are contained in the Report of the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies for that year, and are correctly stated in the *Morning Post* tables. For 1920 the Registrar's figures are not yet available, and the *Morning Post* has in consequence had to resort to the more arduous procedure of analysing the various Trade Union balance sheets. The results are not always distinguished for their accuracy.

Thus in the case of the National Union of Railwaymen, the total management expenses in 1920 are stated to be £255,065. So particularly concerned is the *Morning Post* at the management of this Union that the items in management expenses are set out in detail, concluding with the entry "other expenses of management—£83,302." On reference, however, to the Annual Report of the National Union of Railwaymen for 1920, it will be found that whilst the other entries are as stated by the *Morning Post*, the last item reads "£65,471." The *Morning Post* would do well to avoid an error of £17,831.

* *Morning Post* Pamphlet, p. 1.

† It may be noted in passing that this "random selection" produces some curious results. Thus the Union chosen to represent the boot and shoe industry is the Amalgamated Society of Boot and Shoe Makers and Repairers, a Society having 2,000 members. No reference is made to the National Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives with its 88,000 members.

This particular item is further held up to contempt by the *Morning Post*, on the ground that to enter a sum of £83,302 (or, to give the correct figure, £65,471) as "other expenses," is reminiscent of the book-keeping of the housewife whose accounts contained the entry "Received from John £10. Spent it all."

The Account, however, in which the entry to which the *Morning Post* takes exception occurs, is a Summary General Account. If the author of the *Morning Post* articles desires further information, he can obtain it, so far as the Head Office Expenditure is concerned, by turning to pp. 12 and 13 of the Report. He should also learn from the great variety of the items there enumerated, the impossibility of giving details of this expenditure in the Summary Account, both for the Head Office and for the 1,600 Branches of the National Union of Railwaymen. Moreover, the item in question reads not "other expenses of management," as stated by the *Morning Post*, but "other expenses of management, properties, etc." On page 21 of the Report a separate Properties Account will be found, accounting for the Union's expenditure of £1,697 under this head.

Another illustration of the inaccuracy of the *Morning Post* figures is contained in the figures for the management expenses of the Sailors and Firemen's Union, in 1920, stated by the *Morning Post* as £144,481. It is difficult to see how this figure has been arrived at from the balance sheet of that Union. Adding the several items of branch management expenditure set out in the Report for the year ending December 31, 1920, we get a total of £86,983. To this must be added from the Central Account:—

Government and Management Expenses	..	..	£	26,217
Head Office Expenses	..	..	..	13,910
Organising and Propaganda	..	..	..	2,685
Depreciation Office Furniture and Fittings	..	..	..	5,706
				<u>£48,518</u>

Central management expenditure plus branch management expenditure thus amounts to £86,983 plus £48,518, or a total of £135,501, which is nearly £9,000 less than the figure given by the *Morning Post*.*

INCREASES IN MEMBERSHIP

In the first table printed by the *Morning Post* increases in membership and in expenditure upon benefits are shown as well as increases in management expenses between 1918 and 1920. Before commenting on these figures, however, the *Morning Post* reproduces this table on a fresh page, carefully omitting all the figures except those relating to management expenses.

We may agree with the *Morning Post* that "a Union which doubles its membership should not need to double the expenses of its officials." It is, however, obvious that large increases in membership will involve increased staffs, heavier expenses in respect of printing, stationery, postage, travelling expenses, etc., in some cases the

* It is not clear whether the *Morning Post* does or does not include legal expenses as part of management expenditure. In the analysis of the National Union of Railwaymen's balance sheet legal expenses are not included. In other instances the *Morning Post* figures are only explicable on the assumption that they do include legal expenses. The corrected figures given in the list for the Dockers are exclusive of legal expenses. The inclusion of these would raise the total management expenses to £137,234. As "legal expenses" usually include expenditure on legal assistance to members, their inclusion in "management expenses" is very misleading. This point is dealt with more fully below in the discussion of the nature of management expenses on page 13.

opening of new branches, involving increased expenditure upon rents and office management generally. Comparisons of management expenses between different dates without any reference to changes that have occurred in membership over the same period are grossly misleading.

Between 1918 and 1920, the membership of the thirty Trade Unions examined by the *Morning Post* increased very greatly. As will be seen from the table given on page 12, the percentage changes in membership varied from a decrease of 2% in the case of the Woolcombers to an increase of 121% in the case of the Cotton Spinners. In three cases the membership more than doubled in the two years under consideration; in eleven out of the twenty-nine cases an increase of 50% or over was recorded; and in nineteen cases the increase reached or exceeded 30%.

INCREASED EXPENDITURE UPON BENEFITS AND RISE IN COST OF LIVING

The *Morning Post's* attempt to prove that Trade Unions are expending their funds on management expenses and politics instead of upon benefits, is based on particularly insidious perversions. For this purpose, comparison is made of the expenditure on different objects of all registered Trade Unions between 1911 and 1918. As will appear below, the authors of the *Morning Post* pamphlet acted cunningly in a randoming at this point the comparison of the thirty selected Trade Unions between 1918 and 1920, and in confining their inquiry to the period 1911-1918.

In this connection we are invited to believe that "since 1912—the date which may be said to usher in the new Unionism which seeks to turn Trade Unions from benefit societies to bodies for political agitation—expenses of management have steadily advanced, and they simply left forward when in 1918 the policy of 'political' strikes was entered upon."[†]

This statement is supported by the following figures from the Report of the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies, relating to all registered Trade Unions:—

EXPENDITURE PER MEMBER				
		On Benefits	On Discreet Politics	On Management
1911	.. ..	20s. 6d.	nil	6s. 10d.
1918	.. ..	8s. 10d.	6d.	8s. 9d.

Having printed these figures the *Morning Post* has wisely refrained from comment or explanation. No mention is made of the following facts, in the light of which these figures must be read, if a true picture of the state of affairs is to be obtained.

(1) Increase in Cost of Living

Between 1914 and 1918 the cost of living rose by 100%. Precise figures are not available for a comparison reaching back to 1911, but since it is known that between 1911 and 1914 the cost of living was rising, the difference between 1911 and 1918 would be even greater than between 1914 and 1918.

While the cost of living (affecting the purchasing power of Trade Union salaries, travelling expenses, rents, postage, printing, stationery and numerous other items figuring as Trade Union management expenses) rose by upwards of 100%, the increase in the cost of management of registered Trade Unions per member was only 28%.

[†] *Morning Post* Pamphlet, p. 2.

* It is interesting to notice that a latent respect for veracity causes the author of the *Morning Post* pamphlet to print this word between inverted commas.

(2) Political Expenditure

As regards expenditure on political objects, the authors of the *Morning Post* pamphlet appear to have at this point conveniently forgotten a fact with which they are elsewhere no less conveniently acquainted, namely, that in 1911 Trade Unions were labouring under the ban imposed by the Osborne Judgment preventing the expenditure of their funds on political purposes. Prior to the Trade Union Act of 1913, Unions were not required to establish the separate political funds, on the basis of which the figures of political expenditure for subsequent years are compiled. No comparison of political expenditure is therefore possible with any year prior to 1913.

(3) Benefits

The *Morning Post* is concerned that expenditure upon benefits should have been reduced. No mention, however, is made of the fact that 1918 was a year of exceptionally good trade, and that consequently the calls upon Trade Union benefit funds were unusually slight. This, of course, particularly affects expenditure upon unemployment benefit in which accordingly the decline is considerable. Expenditure upon unemployment benefit in 1918 amounted to 1s. 4d. per member as against an average expenditure in the four years ended in 1914 of 4s. 8d. per member. In January, 1918, the percentage of Trade Unionists unemployed was only 1.4; in January, 1911, the corresponding figure was 5%.

The decline in benefits is further accounted for by a large decline in dispute benefit per member, as between the pre-war period and the year 1918. It can hardly be supposed that the *Morning Post* really desires to lament the reduction in expenditure on this benefit. The sum spent on dispute benefit amounted in 1918 to 1s. 3d. per member, as compared with 3s. 2d. in the most favourable of the years immediately preceding the war, or 13s. 5d. in 1912, the year of the national mining stoppage.

The year 1918 was also exceptional in regard to sickness benefit. The recruitment of Trade Unionists towards the end of 1917 and beginning of 1918 was exceptionally heavy. At the same time many Unionists who ceased to be chargeable to their Unions in times of sickness were retained in membership. Again, towards the end of 1918 many skilled workers were released from military service and resumed their Trade Union membership, thus swelling the total membership without, however, having been chargeable to their Unions for sickness during the year. Finally, there was a great influx of members into groups having a low average of contributions and benefits. "All these factors combined sufficed to prevent the rise in the cost per member of sickness benefit which might otherwise have been anticipated."*

These facts are taken from the Chief Registrar's Report for 1918. The *Morning Post*, having quoted the Registrar's figures, has carefully ignored the explanatory paragraphs which alone make the figures intelligible.

INCREASE IN EXPENDITURE UPON BENEFITS, 1918-1920

As already pointed out, the *Morning Post* has abstained from carrying on this particular comparison of management expenditure at different dates to the period 1918-1920, on the ground that "no aggregate statistics since 1918 are available." There seems, however, no good reason, other than a desire to present a misleading picture, why, in the absence of aggregate statistics, the figures for the thirty Unions whose balance sheets the *Morning Post* has examined should not have been used for the purpose of showing the relative rates of increase of management expenditure and expenditure upon benefits between 1918 and 1920.

* Report of the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies on Trade Unions in 1918.

In the following table this has been done with a view to completing the *Morning Post's* comparison. Further, figures are added showing the increase in the cost of living and the percentage increase in membership over the same period, which, as a ready pointed out, the *Morning Post* tacitly ignores when emphasising the increase in management expenses.

TRADE UNION	Percentage Increase in Cost of Living	Percentage Increase in Membership	Percentage Increase in Expenditure upon Benefits	Percentage Increase in Management Expenses
	1918—20	1918—20	1918—20	1918—20
Carpenters and Joiners	25	28	92	108
Cabinet Makers	25	26	83	61
Operative Plasterers	25	83	20	103
House & Ship Painters	25	96	105	91
Woolcombers	25	21	350	180
Sailors & Firemen	25	48	12	104*
Textile Workers (Huddersfield) ..	25	42	971	113
Textile Workers (Staffs)	25	108	33	281
Workers' Union	25	24	157	98
Agricultural Workers	25	105	822	305
Grimen Workers	25	35	262	156
Electrical Trades	25	83	1663	128
Dock Workers	25	43	341	128
National Union of Railwaymen ..	25	10	138	138*
South Wales Miners	25	30	502	64
Yorkshire Miners	25	5	1450	38
Railway Clerks	25	22	61	153
Bricklayers	25	56	5	108
Dressers	25	38	49	96
Automated Engineers	25	53	187	74
Bottle-makers	25	41	12	101
Iron & Steel Trades	25	55	722	32
London Compositors	25	17	88	111
Plumbers	25	70	140	145
Locomotive Engineers	25	79	26	67
Cotton Spinners	25	121	981	861
Engineers & Fittermen	25	42	779	105
Bakers	25	8	125	71
Builders' Labourers	25	27	60	80
Unweighted average increase	25	48	292	109

* *Morning Post* figure.

† Correct figure.

‡ Decrease

The foregoing table does not give much support to the *Morning Post* view that Trade Unions are abandoning their "benefit" activities. In twenty out of the twenty-nine instances quoted, expenditure on benefit increased by over 50%; in sixteen cases it amounted to over 100%; in ten cases the increase was over 200%; in two cases the increase was over 1,000%. Further, if we follow the *Morning Post* in taking an unweighted average of the percentage increases in various cases, we find that membership increased on the average by 48%; management expenses by 109%; and benefits by 292%; whilst there was a 25% increase in the cost of living.

In several instances where management expenditure shows a considerable increase the explanation is to be found in the large increases in membership enrolled during the year. Thus the Operative Plasterers increased their membership by 83%; the Textile Workers of Staffordshire by 108%; the Agricultural Workers by 105%. The Iron and Steel Trades Confederation increased their membership by 55%; their expenditure on benefits by 722%, whilst their management expenses increased only

by 32%. The Electrical Trades Union increased their membership by 83%, and their outlay upon benefits by no less than 1,663%, whilst the increase in management expenses was 128%.

The case of the Railway Clerks' Association calls for special explanation. Membership increased by 22%, benefits declined by 6%, whilst management expenses increased by 153%. It was only in 1919 that the R.C.A. first obtained full official recognition. This important change in status meant, of course, a very great extension of the Association's work involving exceptionally large outlay on staff and organisation. Moreover, during the year 1920, negotiations of very great importance for the grading of railway servants and the standardisation of conditions were carried through, which involved a great number of meetings of the Executive Committee and its Sub-Committees. Members of the R.C.A. Executive Committee are not (as are, no doubt, the members of many of the committees to which the public of the *Morning Post* is accustomed) persons of independent means who can afford to devote their time to committee work without remuneration. In the Report of the R.C.A. it is explained that the increased expenditure upon office and staff is accounted for by the necessity of opening and staffing new divisional offices "for the purpose of dealing with the appeals for improved classifications and other matters connected with our National Settlements, also for assisting our newly-formed Line Committees, and other work arising from the official recognition of the R.C.A."

INCREASE IN THE COST OF LIVING, 1918—1920

As the increase in the cost of living is a matter of the first importance in connection with the increase in Trade Union management expenses between pre-war days and 1918, so also is it a factor of considerable, though naturally of less, importance as between 1918 and 1920. The *Morning Post*, having selected the items of hotel expenditure and railway travelling, has discovered that the increase in these between 1918 and 1920 was not more than about 10% and 8% respectively. The *Morning Post* is, however, woefully in error if it supposes that the principal item in Trade Union management expenses is the bills of Trade Union officials staying in "good-class London hotels, of the type which a prosperous professional or business man would patronise."* A much more accurate estimate of the increased expenditure necessitated by the rise in the cost of living is obtained by observing the movements of indices representing the cost of living generally than by the arbitrary selection of particular items. According to the Minister of Labour's index, the increase between June, 1918, and June, 1920, amounted to 25%.

Having regard, therefore, to their largely increased membership, to the 25% increase in the cost of living, and to the very greatly increased outlay upon benefits, it is not surprising to find that in several instances Trade Unions have found their management expenses increasingly heavy.

THE NATURE OF MANAGEMENT EXPENSES

The efforts of the *Morning Post* are further directed to proving that expenses of management absorb an excessive proportion of the total income of Trade Unions.

This part of the *Morning Post's* argument is introduced, not very auspiciously, by a further misrepresentation. Taking the aggregate figures for 1918 we learn from the *Morning Post* that

* *Morning Post* Pamphlet, p. 3.

	£	s.	d.
The Trade Union member paid in	1	5	6
There was paid out in benefits	0	9	1
There was paid out for management and politics ..	0	9	11
Leaving for the rainy day	0	6	6

In the first place, it may be remarked that the actual figures in this table are not correct, nor do they tally with those quoted by the *Morning Post* itself on the same page. The correct figures are:—

	£	s.	d.
Income from member	1	6	0
Paid out in benefits	0	9	2
Paid out for management and politics	0	9	3
Payments to other Societies	0	1	7
Balance	0	6	0

cr, if we follow the *Morning Post* in omitting "Payments to other Societies," the balance is 7s. 7d.

Secondly, the balance remaining after deducting the above items of expenditure from the total income from members does not represent all that was left for the rainy day in 1918. Trade Union investments not being of so insecure a character as the *Morning Post* endeavours later to indicate, an addition must be made on account of income from other sources.* In 1918 this amounted to approximately one-eighth as much as the contributions of members, or 3s. 3d. per head. The income of Trade Unions, therefore, during the year 1918 amounted to £1.9s. 3d. per member; and the balance left for the rainy day after deduction of the above items of expenditure was 9s. 3d., an increase of 42% over the *Morning Post* figure.

As a further commentary upon the *Morning Post's* ideas of Trade Union extravagance, we may direct attention to the fact that these "extravagantly-managed bodies" held in 1918 funds amounting to £14,936,977, or £2.15s. 7d. per member. According to the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies, "In view of the great expansion of membership in 1918 and in the preceding year, the position of Trade Unions in regard to accumulated funds must be regarded from the Trade Union standpoint as extremely satisfactory. In the space of five years, during which the membership of Trade Unions has been doubled, sufficient funds have been accumulated not only to cover the new members and maintain the same capital per head, but to regain the ground lost by the Miners' Strike in 1912."

These, however, are matters which, in comparison with the major errors of the *Morning Post*, are insignificant. The term "management expenses" covers, in the case of Trade Unions, matters of an altogether different character from those described as management expenses in the case of other organisations. Hence the *Morning Post's* comparisons with Friendly Societies is entirely misleading. While graciously remarking that "a Trade Union has some other legitimate business than its Friendly Society work," the *Morning Post* wholly fails to make due allowance for this fact; or, rather (which comes to the same thing), having taken upon itself to decide what is the legitimate business of Trade Unions, has virtually confined that term to the collection of contributions and the distribution of benefits.

In point of fact, as every Trade Union official is only too well aware, the business of a Trade Union (and, despite the *Morning Post*, we say the *legitimate* business) is of a excessively various character. The work which a Trade Union does for its members is in no sense to be valued by the actual sums paid out in benefits; nor is all other

* See page 21.

expenditure to be dismissed as "political" or administrative. An enormous amount of work is involved in the negotiation of the very large number of agreements, national and local, as to wages and conditions of work under which industry is to-day carried on. Judging from the attitude of the *Morning Post* during the recent dispute in the engineering industry (which arose from the breakdown of one such agreement), we can hardly suppose that the *Morning Post* deplors the existence of these agreements, the negotiation of which involves so much trouble and expense. Collective bargaining is a first principle of Trade Unionism. Nor can the resentment of Trade Union members be inflamed against the use of their money for this purpose.

The National Union of Railwaymen, for instance, against which the *Morning Post* is particularly exasperated, had, in 1920, approximately 460,000 members. If we suppose that the negotiations of this Union during that year secured to its members an average of no more than 2s. a week above what they could have obtained without the help of any organisation, the total gain to members of the National Union of Railwaymen from this branch of the Union's activities alone would be no less than £2,392,000, or between nine and ten times the whole of the outlay in 1920 on all forms of management expenditure, and over four times the total income from members.

Secondly, Trade Unions have a great deal of legal and kindred business, the whole of their expenditure upon which figures in the form of accounts at present prescribed by the Chief Registrar as "management expenses." The individual Trade Unionist, for whose welfare the *Morning Post* is so deeply concerned, is dependent upon his Trade Union to secure legal redress for injuries that he may suffer. But the *Morning Post* ignores the perfectly legitimate expenditure that Trade Unions incur on this account.

Nor must it be forgotten that for every case that is brought into Court a very much larger number of cases are settled outside the Courts altogether. These cases can only be settled by having Trade Union staffs to deal with them, and by the expenditure which is necessarily involved in all negotiation.

In illustration of the importance to Trade Unionists of the work performed by Unions in protecting the individual rights of their members, some figures may be quoted from the Report of the National Union of Agricultural Workers, 1920. The total amount of wages claims recovered by this Union amounted in that year to £12,940 2s. 1½d. During the same period the Union also secured £13,134 7s. 7d. in lump sum settlements, on account of Workmen's Compensation, besides a large number of settlements in the form of weekly payments. The sums paid to members, thanks to the activities of the Union, in respect of these two matters—recovery of wages and lump sum compensation settlements alone—amounted to 36% of the total contributions paid in for all purposes. The members of the Union had, therefore, already "got back" over one-third of their money before they received a single penny in the form of what are specifically termed "benefits."

These illustrations are not taken from a Union in which the proportion of income spent on "management expenses" is particularly low. In fact, the reverse is the case. The National Union of Agricultural Workers is one which stands low in the order of merit drawn up by the *Morning Post*.

It is evident that the *Morning Post* has much to learn about the nature of the work done by Trade Unions under the comprehensive term "management." It may be suggested that the researches of the author of the *Morning Post* articles into Trade Union reports might advantageously be carried very much further before that journal takes upon itself to decide what is a proper proportion of its income for a Trade Union to expend in this way.

As should now be perfectly clear, comparisons between the proportion of income expended on management expenses by Friendly Societies and Trade Unions are altogether misleading, since the work of the former differs enormously from that of the latter. The *Morning Post* may well be reminded that the administration of benefits must in itself be an expensive matter. The cost of administration of unemployment benefit alone by the State will illustrate this. Thus, the total contributions paid by employers, workers and the State under all the Unemployment Insurance Acts (including the Unemployed Workers' Dependents Acts) from July, 1912, to April, 1922, amounted to £67,500,000. The cost of administration over the same period amounted to £14,000,000, or approximately 21%. The working expenses of the principal fire and accident insurance companies in this country run up to over 40%, and in some cases over 50%, of the premium income. When to the benefit work of Trade Unions is added their work as negotiators, as lawyers and as champions in innumerable ways of the individual rights and liberties of their members, it is apparent that the proportion of income spent by these bodies on their so-called "management expenses" compares most favourably with that incurred by other organisations whose sole work is the transaction of business that forms only a part of the multifarious legitimate activities of Trade Unions.

It is also significant that the Chief Registrar has recognised that the present form in which Trade Union accounts are published is unsatisfactory. In future the practice of lumping together expenditure upon much of the most important Trade Union work under the single heading "management expenses" will be abandoned. Expenditure upon purely Trade Union work will hereafter be shown under separate headings, detailing the amounts expended by branches, district offices and headquarters respectively. The *Morning Post* will, therefore, no longer be able to plead ignorance as an excuse for its falsifications.

MANAGEMENT EXPENSES AS A PROPORTION OF CONTRIBUTIONS IN DIFFERENT UNIONS

The *Morning Post* further attempts to make political capital out of the considerable difference between the proportions which management expenses bear to income from members in different Unions, and prints a table showing these proportions for twenty out of the thirty selected Unions in 1920. From this table we are asked to believe that "it is, generally speaking, the 'political' Unions that are extravagant in expenses of management."

In this, as in previous tables of the *Morning Post*, facts are suppressed or ignored which are essential to a true understanding of the position. Thus no reference is made to the very different degrees of wealth or poverty of the members of different Trade Unions. The Unions whose members are engaged on comparatively well-paid work can levy comparatively high rates of contribution. But the work of these Unions as negotiators, and as champions of their members' rights, is not thereby proportionately increased. Hence the Unions whose members are comparatively well-to-do, inevitably tend to show a somewhat lower ratio of management expenses to income from members than do those Unions whose members are exceedingly poor and unable to pay more than the lowest possible contributions to their Union. There are, indeed, for many reasons, substantial differences in the rates of contribution paid by the members of different Trade Unions; and often, by their own option, by the members of the same Trade Union. Unless attention is paid to the different bases of contributions, no intelligible comparison can be made between the proportion of management expenses to income in the case of different Unions. If the author of the *Morning Post* pamphlet wished to present an accurate and informative table, he should have been at pains to inquire further into this matter. He should, for instance, have

given prominence to the fact that in the Agricultural Workers' Union the income of 1920 was unduly low in proportion to working expenses since it was not till half-way through the year that a long overdue increase in the rate of contribution from 3d. to 4d. a week was made to meet the greatly increased work and responsibilities of the Union.

MANAGEMENT EXPENSES AND "POLITICAL" UNIONS

Finally, the contention that it is "the 'political' Unions which, generally speaking, are extravagant in expenses of management," remains in the light of the facts wholly unintelligible. The *Morning Post* nowhere explains what is meant by a "political" Union. Does it mean a Union which indulges in what the *Morning Post* calls "political" strikes? If so, the *Morning Post* has adduced no evidence whatever to prove that the Unions which show a comparatively high proportion of management expenses are also those with the blackest record of "political" strikes. Of the Unions examined by the *Morning Post*, the highest proportions of management expenses to contributions in 1920 are shown by the Railway Clerks, Electrical Trades, Woolcombers, Dock Workers, Sailors & Firemen and Agricultural Workers in that order. We await evidence that these Unions have shown a special affection for "political" strikes.

If, on the other hand, by "political" Unions the *Morning Post* means (what seems to be a more reasonable interpretation of this peculiar term) those Unions whose members contribute comparatively largely to the Political Funds of their Unions, then the attempt to prove a connection between the "political" character of a Union, and its proportion of management expenses to income breaks down hopelessly. This is demonstrated beyond dispute by the following table. The Unions covered by the table and the figures relating to management expenses are reproduced from the *Morning Post's* own table. To these figures is added another column showing the proportion borne by the income of the Political Fund (as shown on page 1 of the *Morning Post's* pamphlet) to the total income of members.

UNION	Expenditure from Political Fund—as Percentage of Income from Members in 1920	Expenses of Management as Percentage of Income from Members in 1920
Operative Plasterers	1.0	12
Iron & Steel Trades	4.2	13
Amalgamated Engineers	0.7	18
Yorkshire Miners	4.1	23
House & Ship Painters	—	24
Dyers & Bleachers	0.9	27
Textile Workers (Staffs.)	4.2	27
Bricklayers	—	34
Workers' Union	2.4	36
Textile Workers (Yorks.)	5.6	39
South Wales Miners	5.6	44
Railwaymen	8.1	(47)*
Carpenters & Joiners	0.4	(44)†
Tailors & Garment Workers	5.2	56
Agricultural Workers	5.4	59
Sailors & Firemen	1.0	(59)*
Dock Workers	—	(56)†
Woolcombers	5.2	59
Electrical Trades	1.3	61
Railway Clerks	9.0	63

* *Morning Post* figure.

† Correct figure

It will be seen that there is absolutely no correspondence whatever between the figures in the two columns of the table. Thus, the Electrical Trades Union, with a proportion of management expenses greater than any but one other Union in the table, has a scarcely higher percentage of political expenditure than the Operative Plasterers, which has a lower percentage of management expenses than any other. Some Unions with comparatively large expenditure upon management devote less than 1% to political purposes. Others with much lower management expenses are paying 5% or 6% for political purposes. None is paying more than 9%.

CONCLUSIONS AS TO MANAGEMENT EXPENSES

In the light of the facts and figures given above it is sufficiently clear that the *Morning Post's* arguments in regard to the management expenses of Trade Unions are based throughout on suppressions or perversions of the truth, which do that journal no credit. If such methods were wholly the result of the ignorance of the investigators employed by the *Morning Post*, the publication of these fallacious results would still be in the highest degree culpable. But it is difficult to suppose that falsifications which point so persistently in one direction are merely the result of gross but unprejudiced ignorance.

The *Morning Post* is painfully wide of the mark in its estimate of the intelligence of Trade Unionists if it supposes that they will accept these grave and palpable misrepresentations of the Trade Union position as evidence of the goodwill of that journal towards the Trade Union Movement.

III

POLITICAL EXPENDITURE

The second part of the *Morning Post's* pamphlet is devoted to criticism of Trade Union political expenditure, and is part and parcel of the same agitation as has already given birth to the Trade Union Act Amendment Bill, the true nature of which is exposed in the foregoing pages.

A FALSE DISTINCTION BETWEEN POLITICAL AND INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Criticism of this character, like the Trade Union Act Amendment Bill itself, is based on a fundamental—and it would seem a wilful—misunderstanding of the whole position. It is increasingly evident that the emancipation of the working class of this country cannot be achieved by "political" or by "industrial" action alone. It can only be achieved by the combined efforts of the duly-elected representatives to whom the workers have entrusted their interests both in Parliament and in the Trade Unions. The *Morning Post* is no doubt aware that leading Trade Union officials play a prominent part in the Labour Party, and that the leaders of the Parliamentary Labour Party are in many cases themselves Trade Union officials. We do not dispute the fact that the whole tendency of the time is towards a closer co-operation between the Trade Unions and the Labour Party. Such a movement registers the recognition by the mass of Trade Unionists of the fact (to which the *Morning Post* is wilfully blind) that their true interests can only be served by action in the political world by the Labour Party and in the industrial world by the Trade Unions. Meanwhile, as has already been pointed out in Section I of this pamphlet, the liberty of those Trade Unionists who have not yet recognised the unity of their political and industrial interests is amply safeguarded by the contracting-out clauses of the Trade Union Act as these at present stand.

THE RAILWAYMEN'S POLITICAL FUND

In the matter of politics as also in the matter of management expenses, the *Morning Post* singles out individual Unions for particularly invidious attention. In a paragraph headed "The Railwaymen's Political Fund" attempts are made to prove that the National Union of Railwaymen is deliberately transferring sums including the money of political objectors from the General to the Political Fund Account. Such a suggestion, if it does not originate in deliberate misrepresentation, can only be explained by colossal ignorance as to methods of accounting on the part of the author of the *Morning Post* articles.

The *Morning Post* is alarmed to discover that the contributions to the Political Fund are at the rate of 10% of contributions to the General Fund. The explanation is simplicity itself. Under Rule XXI of the Union 10% of the contributions of those members who do not claim exemption from the Political Fund are deemed to be contributions to the Political Fund. A member naturally pays his general and political subscriptions together, and the importance of this proviso is that it enables him, in accordance with the Trade Union Act, 1913, to know exactly how much he is paying for political purposes.

The *Morning Post* would do well to study the whole of Rule XXI, regulating the administration of the Political Fund. The first paragraph of the Rule lays down that exemption notices can be obtained "by or on behalf of any member either by application at or by post from the General Office or any branch office of the Union, or from the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies." Moreover, under Paragraph 8 of Rule XXI, when a member has given notice of objection to political contribution, his notice, if not withdrawn, stands indefinitely, and does not require the periodical renewal which it is proposed to require from all members approving political contributions under the Trade Union Act Amendment Bill.

It is further laid down that "the Executive Committee shall give effect to the exemption of members to contribute to the Political Fund of the Union by relieving any member who is exempt from the payment of part of any periodical contribution required from the member towards the expenses of the Union"—i.e., by not allocating any part of his contribution to the Political Fund.

These are the Rules; and it is perfectly clear from the Report that they are carried out. The only items in the income of the Political Fund are "Members' Contributions" and "Interest." That members do effectively exercise their right is indisputably established by the statement of aggregate branch income and expenditure in which the following entries appear:—

Contributions to General Fund (including political)	..	..	..	£423,494
" " " " (excluding political)	..	..	..	£17,825

We learn, therefore, that members whose aggregate subscription amounted to £17,825 exercised their right during 1920 to be exempt from contribution to the Political Fund. The author of the *Morning Post* articles has—whether deliberately or otherwise we do not presume to say—entirely disregarded this statement of income and expenditure in which the relevant information for which he professes to seek is contained.

POLITICAL FUNDS AND BALLOTS

The *Morning Post* further insinuates that the figures of voting recorded when ballots were taken on the question of establishing political funds contain evidence that political objectors are not in fact allowed to exercise their right of exemption.

Thus it is pointed out that in a number of Unions where few or no cases of contracting-out are recorded, a considerable minority voted against the establishment of a political fund. It is assumed that everybody who ever voted against the institution of a political fund is a political objector still, and should, therefore, if no improper influence is brought to bear, figure on the list of those who are exempt from political contributions to-day. The number of contractors-out should correspond exactly with the number of minority votes at the ballot. If it does not, the *Morning Post* sends Trade Union tyranny.

Such an argument, however, entirely overlooks the fact that most of the political ballots were taken several years ago. Most of the principal Unions at the time in existence took their political ballots at the earliest possible opportunity after the passing of the Trade Union Act in 1913. Of the total Unions which had balloted on the question of political funds down to April, 1921, half had taken their ballots before April, 1915. The ballots therefore often represent the views of the members of the Union seven, eight and nine years ago. During the last ten years opinion has moved rapidly. Even the *Morning Post* must be aware in what direction events are developing. The growing strength of the Labour Party in the House of Commons and in the country bears eloquent testimony to the trend of the workers' opinion. Many of those who eight or nine years ago would have viewed with reluctance the use of their money in support of the Labour Party have since come to recognise the essential unity of the political and the industrial sides of the Labour Movement, and are enthusiastic supporters both of their Unions and of the Labour Party. It would indeed be astonishing if the number of political objectors had remained at the level of the ballots of eight or nine years ago, after the experience of the war and the peace which has since intervened. It is characteristic of the crooked and calumnious methods of the *Morning Post* that the explanation of the declining number of political objectors should be sought in the exercise of improper influence by Union officials, rather than in the change of political opinion amongst the workers themselves, of which such abundant corroboration is to be found on every hand—not least in the columns of the *Morning Post* itself.

Nor need it be feared that the fact that political ballots are now in many cases of several years' standing is in any way a danger to the interests of the political objector. It is open to the members of a Union at any time to call for a second ballot. Had the opinion of the last decade moved in a direction contrary to that which it has in fact followed, there would have been many cases of second ballots reversing the decision to establish a political fund, or at any rate showing an increased minority against such a fund. In point of fact, however, nothing of the kind has occurred. There have been only four cases of second ballots. In every one of these the trend of opinion in favour of the political work of the Labour Party is clearly reflected. Thus the Amalgamated Society of Dyers, Bleachers, etc. (one of the Unions subjected to the searchlight of the *Morning Post*), recorded at a first ballot 3,013 votes for, and 3,670 against, a political fund. At a second ballot in 1919 the votes were—in favour, 11,004; against, 3,135; the adverse majority of 657 having thus changed to a favourable majority of 7,869. The United Patternmakers at a first ballot recorded 1,045 votes for, and 1,686 against, a political fund. A second ballot recorded 1,689 favourable and 711 adverse votes. The Amalgamated Union of Co-operative and Commercial Employees* recorded at a first ballot 11,130 votes in favour of, and 11,967 against, a political fund. At the second ballot the figures were 13,754 in favour and 5,854 against. Finally, the Padiham and District Weavers' Association at a first ballot recorded 1,381 in favour of, and 1,846 against, a political fund. At the second ballot the votes were 729 in favour, 570 against.

* Now amalgamated with the Warehouse Workers' Union into the National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers.

These four cases illustrate in unmistakable fashion the direction in which things are moving. They show what has happened to the former political objectors in cases in which no suggestion of undue influence is, or can be, brought. The political objectors have simply changed their minds. And there is every reason to suppose that what has happened in these four Unions is paralleled by what is happening in other Unions, which have had no occasion to take a second ballot on a matter the original decision upon which gives satisfaction to an increasing proportion, if not to the whole, of the members concerned.

IV

TRADE UNION INVESTMENTS

In a final paragraph the *Morning Post* endeavours to disturb the sleep of the thrifty Trade Unionist by hinting that Trade Union funds are invested in dangerous investments. The *Morning Post* even goes so far as to suggest that "it would be sound to provide in any future Trade Union legislation that all funds must be invested in 'Trustee Securities.'" We note with concern, however, that the *Morning Post* has omitted to make a similar suggestion with regard to the funds of Capitalist and Employers' Associations, many of which, were they obliged, as the Trade Unions are, to publish their balance sheets, would probably be found to be in at least as great need of the good offices of the *Morning Post* in this matter.

THE FACTS ABOUT THE TRADE UNION FUNDS

This particular *Morning Post* scare, like the others, is easily disposed of by a simple statement of the facts.

According to the latest Report of the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies (1919) the total funds of registered Trade Unions amounted to £16,000,000. Of this sum £7,000,000 was deposited with banks or held as cash. "Investments in Public Funds" amounted to a further £7,000,000, of which nearly half represents investments in Government War Securities. The remaining balance of about £2,000,000 was distributed as follows:—£788,000 as loans on mortgage to members and others; £29,000 in Building Societies; £662,000 in Freehold and Leasehold Properties; £58,000 in Railway Securities; £162,000 in Trading Firms (including £23,500 in Co-operative Wholesale Society Development Bonds); and £470,000 in other Assets (i.e., loans to other Trade Unions, amounts due from National Insurance sections, goods, furniture, etc.) On the previous page of the Report we read "of the £16,000,000 funds held by registered Trade Unions only the very small total of £171,922 is set aside as belonging to the Political Funds established under the Trade Union Act, 1913."

These figures scatter to the winds the fears which the *Morning Post* has endeavoured to awaken in the minds of Trade Unionists. It is evident that a provision that Trade Union funds must be invested in Trustee Securities, while it would impose intolerable restrictions upon the freedom of Trade Unions to invest comparatively small sums in support of different branches of Labour activity whose continuance may be vital to the success of the Movement, would really make singularly little difference to the investment of the great mass of Trade Union funds. These are already invested in funds of unimpeachable soundness.

MORE "MORNING POST" PERVERSIONS

Again, in the matter of Trade Union funds the *Morning Post* has been unable to resist the temptation to perversion and misleading statement. Objection is apparently taken to the investment of Trade Union funds in the Co-operative Movement, either, it must be supposed, because the Co-operative Wholesale Society is held to be a "political-revolutionary" organisation, or because fears are entertained as to the financial soundness of this concern. It does not much matter what are the exact objections of the *Morning Post* to the Co-operative Movement as an investment for Trade Union funds, since whatever their nature, they are evidently based upon gross ignorance of the character of the Co-operative Movement and of its financial strength. In point of fact, there are no reasons why Trade Unions should not, and excellent reasons why they should, invest their money in this flourishing enterprise.

Since, however, the *Morning Post* has raised this point, we would suggest that it should confine its statements to an accurate form. In the *Morning Post* pamphlet we read that "the Agricultural Workers' Union has about half its funds in the Co-operative Movement." This statement occurs in a paragraph dealing with Trade Union investments. Although, in deference to the claims of literal correctness, the *Morning Post* states that the funds of the Agricultural Workers are "in" and not "invested in" the Co-operative Movement, it is beyond question that the sense which the statement conveys—and is meant to convey—is that about half the funds are *invested* in the Co-operative Movement. The truth is that out of total assets amounting to £82,432, the Union in question has exactly £5,000 in Co-operative Wholesale Society Development Bonds, and no other investments in Co-operative Funds whatsoever. The explanation of the *Morning Post's* figure is that the Agricultural Workers bank with the Co-operative Wholesale Society's Bank, and had at the time when the balance sheet for 1920 was drawn up a bank balance amounting to £32,476 on current and deposit account. In this instance, as throughout its pamphlet, the *Morning Post* has shown itself past master in the deplorable art of combining verbal accuracy with falsification of substance.

CONCLUSION

The Labour Movement to-day faces a period of crisis. Its history has, indeed, been one of successive crises, each of which it has passed with renewed strength. The crisis of to-day consists in the weakening of Trade Union industrial strength by the prolonged depression of trade which has resulted from capitalist warfare followed by capitalist peace; in the attempts to cripple the political strength of the Movement by reversing the hardly-won legislation of a decade; and by further weighting the already overloaded scales against Trade Unions which alone, of all organisations, are singled out for these invidious attentions; and by the flood of abusive misrepresentation which streams from the *Morning Post*.

The methods, however, to which the enemies of Trade Unionism (calling themselves its friends) are obliged to resort do their case no good. Indeed, they suggest irresistibly that these interests are at heart aware that they have no case. The policy of the self-styled friends of Trade Unions is to throw enough mud in the hope that some of it will stick. It should be unnecessary to point out how experience has long proved that that policy is ever affected by those whose store of sound arguments is conspicuous for its emptiness.

POSTSCRIPT.

RENEWED ATTACKS

With the opening of the Trades Union Congress at Southport, the *Morning Post* has seized the opportunity to return to the charges of extravagance and abuse of political funds which "goodwill" towards the Trade Union Movement so readily inspires. These fresh attacks are contained in articles printed in large type, which appeared in the issues of September 1, 2 and 4, and in a leading article of September 6.

INCONSISTENCY IN THE FIGURES

The *Morning Post* is not as careful as might be expected of a self-constituted critic of Trade Union finance to avoid mutual inconsistency in the figures quoted in the same article.

On September 1 appeared an article headed:—

"TRADE UNION ADMINISTRATION THE 1921 BALANCE SHEETS HUGE DECREASES IN MEMBERSHIP"

In this article a table was embodied based on the 1920 and 1921 balance sheets of tea Trade Unions, and showing membership, income from members, benefits paid out, and "expenses of management" for each of these two years. In the comments on the table, which comprise the greater part of this article, figures are quoted showing the "Huge decreases in membership" sustained by various Unions. In no one instance do these figures accord with those quoted by the *Morning Post* itself in the table comprised in the same article, the discrepancy ranging from 14 to 49% in the case of different Unions. The extent of the difference is shown in the following table, in which the two *Morning Post* versions of the figures are tabulated.

UNION	Membership (as stated in "Morning Post" table)		Loss of membership in 1921		"Morning Post" Discrepancy	Percentage Difference
	1920	1921	Actual difference between cols. (1)—(2)	As stated in "Morning Post" article		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Agricultural Workers ..	180,000	130,030	49,970	60,000	10,030	20
Workers' Union ..	495,162	247,140	248,022	282,050	34,028	14
United Garment Workers ..	86,761	55,488	31,273	Not quoted	—	—
Woolcombers ..	10,981	9,940	1,041	"	17,120	5,389
Electrical Trades ..	57,292	45,561	11,731	"	17,120	5,389
National Union of Railwaymen ..	457,836	386,115	71,721	95,874	24,153	34
Yorkshire Miners ..	189,039	150,722	38,317	Not quoted	—	—
Railway Clerks ..	87,094	60,264	26,790	30,770	3,980	15
Amalgamated Engineers ..	456,891	410,988	45,903	Not quoted	—	—
Locomotive Engineers ..	71,344	59,137	12,207	18,188	5,981	49
	2,062,960	1,561,385	501,575	over 624,000	122,425	24

On September 8, after two correspondents (whose letters were not published) had pointed out the discrepancy, the explanation was supplied by the *Morning Post* in he following not very lucid terms. "The total of defections cited in some cases do sic) not quite agree with the figures obtained by a subtraction of the 1921 total from he 1920 total. The detail is unimportant but should be explained. The 1920 total is given in the 1920 returns is sometimes corrected for the 1921 returns (and the 1921 returns may be subsequently corrected)."

We are surprised to find a journal of the standing of the *Morning Post* dismissing disparities varying up to 49% as "unimportant details." What would the *Morning Post* say of a Trade Union which acted in such a way? It can hardly be supposed that he author of the *Morning Post* articles is unaware that the most elementary principles of statistical accuracy require that either the corrected or the uncorrected figures should be consistently used throughout, or that the explanation of a discrepancy should be published with the figures in which it appears. Indifference to this elementary principle of statistical accuracy can hardly commend the *Morning Post* to the public as a competent and effective critic of Trade Union finance.

MANAGEMENT EXPENSES AND POLITICS IN 1921

The *Morning Post* criticisms, based on the 1921 balance sheets of ten Unions, are of the same general form as the charges directed against the 1920 balance sheets which have already been exposed in the earlier sections of this pamphlet. The only difference is that in the later articles even less attempt has been made than in their predecessors to make the accusation square with the facts. The charges are still that he more "political" a Union is the more extravagant it is; and that "management," as contrasted with benefits, absorbs an increasing and excessive amount of Trade Union expenditure. In addition the *Morning Post* attempts to insinuate that the extravagance and political expenditure of these Trade Unions is the cause of the decline in membership in 1921. We may once more reveal the futility of these charges.

In the *Morning Post* of September 2 the following statement appeared: "In the matter of the Political Levy the Trade Unions fall into three categories.

"1 Trade Unions with no Political Fund (almost invariably these Unions manage their General Fund with economy and prudence).

"2 Trade Unions which have Political Funds, which are levied separately from the General Fund; which put no obstacle in the way of 'contracting-out,' and which treat political matters as subordinate to trade matters.

"3 A group of Unions in which the collection of the Political Fund varies from the questionable to the scandalous, which Unions tend, in a greater or less degree, to become Socialist Revolutionary political clubs."

There certainly are Unions which have, and others which have not, Political Funds. The *Morning Post*, however, makes no attempt to substantiate the implication that the former contrast unfavourably with the latter in point of economy of management—no doubt for the excellent reason that any such attempt would inevitably reveal the baseless character of the charge. The following table, showing the percentage of income spent on "management" by ten Unions which have, and ten which have not, Political Funds, effectively disposes of this insinuation.

"Political" Unions		"Non-political" Unions	
UNION	% Income from members spent on management in 1919	UNION	% Income from members spent on management in 1919
Agricultural Workers	45	(1) Railway Vehicle Builders	65
Workers' Union	39	(2) Vehicle Workers	65
Tailors & Garment Workers ..	42	(3) India Rubber Workers	61
Woolcombers	40	(4) Public Works and Constructional Operatives	49
Electrical Trades	58	(5) Tailors & Tailoresses ..	47
Railwaymen	46	(6) Printing & Paper Workers	44
Yorkshire Miners	25	(7) Plumbers	43
Railway Clerks	65	(8) Leather Workers	42
Amalgamated Engineers	19	(9) House & Ship Painters	32
Locomotive Engineers	44	(10) Bricklayers	31
Unweighted Average	41.5	Unweighted Average	47.9

- (1) Amalgamated Society of Railway Vehicle Builders, etc.; membership, 1919—13,245.
- (2) National Union of Vehicle Workers; membership, 1919—36,802.
- (3) Amalgamated Society of India Rubber, Cable and Asbestos Workers; membership, 1919—18,100.
- (4) Public Works and Constructional Operatives' Trade Union; membership, 1919—14,245.
- (5) Amalgamated Society of Tailors and Tailoresses; membership 1919—36,536.
- (6) National Union of Printing and Paper Workers; membership, 1919—73,354.
- (7) United Operative Plumbers and Domestic Engineers; membership, 1919—20,515.
- (8) Amalgamated Society of Leather Workers; membership, 1919—12,613.
- (9) National Amalgamated Society of Operative House and Ship Painters and Decorators; membership, 1919—62,325.
- (10) Operative Bricklayers' Society; membership, 1919—43,365.

The above table shows that the average percentage of income spent on management by the "political" Unions was appreciably less than the percentage recorded by the "non-political" Unions, being 41.5% as against 47.9%. The figures relate to 1919, the last year for which the Chief Registrar's completed report has been published, and from which the figures for all the Unions are obtainable. It is probable that later figures, were they obtainable, would give substantially the same result, for in 1921 the percentage spent on management by the "political" Unions (46.3), though slightly higher than in 1919, was still below even the 1919 percentage of the "non-political" Unions. It may be added that the ten "non-political" Unions chosen for purposes of comparison were not selected with any reference to their management expenditure. The Unions were selected solely on grounds of their size and representative character.* Their full names and membership are given in footnotes to the table. The ten "political" Unions are those whose balance sheets of 1918, 1920 and 1921 the *Morning Post* has selected for examination.

It will be seen from the table that if the "non-political" Unions "manage their General Fund with economy and prudence," as the *Morning Post* states, the "political" Unions, which it is the whole purpose of the *Morning Post* articles to hold up to obloquy, are even more economically and prudently managed. In the admission contained in a single parenthesis the whole *Morning Post* case falls to the ground.

The charge that in a group of Unions the collection of the Political Fund varies from "the questionable to the scandalous" is equally unsubstantiated. The only actual evidence which is adduced in support of it is a reference to the practice of

* In the sense that an attempt has been made to cover as wide a field of industry as possible. In view of the fact that most of the large Unions have Political Funds, it would not be possible to make a selection of "non-political" Unions covering all the principal industries without including very small Unions which would hardly form a fair basis of comparison.

calculating contributions to the Political Fund as a percentage of the general contribution. It has already been explained in the paragraph on the Railwaymen's Political Fund that this practice is absolutely and entirely compatible with proper provision for contracting-out on the part of political objectors.

But we have still not done with the "political" charge. An article appeared in the *Morning Post* on September 4, under the alarming heading "Extent of Political Exactions," in which it was stated that the ten Unions, whose 1921 balance sheets had been subjected to examination, had appropriated to Political Funds a total of about £85,492 in 1921. The *Morning Post* has refrained from stating its calculation in the only intelligible form—namely, as a percentage of the income of the Unions under review. The real extent of the "exaction" will be understood when it is stated that this appropriation amounts to *only just over 2% of the income from members of the Unions concerned.*

The *Morning Post* further laments that it is not possible to calculate the appropriations to political purposes of all Trade Unions. Figures are, however, available for the total Political and General Funds of Trade Unions. According to the latest (1919) return of the Chief Registrar the total funds of registered Trade Unions stood at £16,000,000 of which only £171,922, or 1.7%, was set aside as belonging to Political Funds.

There remains the renewed charge of extravagance in "management" expenditure, and the general insinuation that the tendency is towards expenditure on politics and management to the exclusion of benefits. "Extravagance still continues"; "Filching Pennies from the Sick and Workless" are *Morning Post* headlines. To those to whom these headlines may appear alarming we commend the following facts:—

1) In 1921 the expenditure upon benefits of the ten "extravagant" Unions denounced by the *"Morning Post,"* exceeded that of 1918 by an average of no less than 1,192% whilst management expenditure only increased on the average by 135%. In other words, looking back over the past four years the rate of increase of expenditure on benefits has been nearly nine times as great as the rate of increase of expenditure on management. Such is the evidence that "management" is absorbing the money that should be spent on benefits.

In 1921, in spite of an average decline in membership of 21%, expenditure upon benefits by these ten Unions increased by no less than 137%, even as compared with the exceptionally high figures of 1920. The detailed figures, together with the changes in management expenses, are given in the following table:—

UNION	Increase (+) or Decrease (–) in Membership 1920–21	Increase (+) or Decrease (–) in expenditure on Benefits 1920–21	Increase (+) or Decrease (–) in expenditure on "Management" 1920–21
Agricultural Workers	–28	+ 47	+ 9
Workers' Union	–50	+ 107	0
Garment Workers	–36	– 22	– 12
Woolcombers	– 9	– 55	– 33
Electrical Trades	–20	+ 133	– 16
Railwaymen	–16	+ 355	– 5
Yorks. Miners	– 2	+ 12	– 23
Railway Clerks	–31	+ 70	+ 9
Amalgamated Engineers	–10	+ 202	+ 27
Loco. Engineers	–17	+ 525	+ 28
Unweighted Average	–21.9	+ 137.1	– 1.6

It should be remembered that to a great extent the decline in membership is likely to be of a temporary character. The *Morning Post* remarks that "the great falling off in membership . . . is clearly independent of economic considerations." No evidence of this remarkable statement is offered except an observation that the decline "shows most markedly in the Railway Unions"; and even this attempt at proof happens to be untrue. The most marked decreases in membership in the ten Unions examined are shown by the Workers' Union (50%) and the Garment Workers (36%). The three Railway Unions lost 31%, 17% and 16% respectively of their members.

There is no doubt whatever that the decrease in Trade Union membership is very closely associated with existing economic conditions. Prolonged unemployment and low wages have caused the membership of hundreds of Trade Unionists to lapse, through absolute inability to keep up their contributions. Especially is this the case in the general labour Unions whose members always work for exceptionally low wages and upon whom the incidence of unemployment is exceptionally severe. That Trade Union membership inevitably suffers in any period of bad trade has long been recognised as axiomatic by competent economists all the world over. We do not wish to under-estimate the importance of such a journal as the *Morning Post*, but we suggest that it has altogether passed the limits of public credulity in attempting to insinuate that its "exposures" have more influence than all the present poverty, unemployment and misery, upon the actions of thousands of British workers, of whom, perhaps, one in a thousand is a regular reader of the *Morning Post*!

The connection between the trade depression and the drop in Trade Union membership is of great importance from the point of view of Trade Union finance. For it means, in the first place, that a very great part of those whose membership has now lapsed will again be enrolled as Trade Union members as soon as trade improves. Trade Unions, therefore, are right not instantly to destroy the extended organisation built up to cope with the vastly increased membership of the years immediately after the war. That is one reason why no appreciable change in management expenditure is recorded in 1921, in spite of a drop of 21% in membership. The other reason is a question of time. Any savings which may result from a temporarily smaller membership cannot make themselves felt the very moment the members leave. It is a recognised principle of all business, not excluding Trade Union management, that while organisation and staff must expand rapidly to cope with increasing business, they can only contract gradually after the exceptional demands have passed away.

(2) Between the years 1918 and 1921—the *"Morning Post's"* years of Trade Union extravagance—the proportion of income from members spent by the ten "extravagant" Unions on management rose only from 39.0% to 46.3%. The ratio of expenses to premium income in 1921 of fifteen leading commercial insurance offices* (which have none of the collective bargaining, legal and other peculiar work included in the "management" of Trade Unions to perform) was 42.9%.

We notice a reluctance on the part of the *Morning Post* when commenting on the "100% increases in management expenditure" of the last few years, to express this expenditure in the only intelligible form—viz., as a percentage of income. We may conclude this pamphlet and finally dispose of the extravagance boggy by tabulating the percentage of income from members absorbed by management in each of the ten Unions under review from 1918–21 inclusive, the whole period covered by both the *Morning Post* attacks. This is shown in the following table:—

* The Alliance, the Atlas, the Commercial Union, the Guardian, the London and Lancashire, the London Assurance, the North British, the Northern, the Phoenix (including Norwich Union), the Royal, the Liverpool and London and Globe, the Royal Exchange, the Scottish Union, the Sun, and the Yorkshire. The figures are taken from an article on "British Insurance Companies" in the *Economist* of June 24, 1922

UNION	Management Expenses as Percentage Income from Members			
	1918	1919	1920	1921
Agricultural Workers	34	45	59	75
Workers' Union	37	30	36	46
Tailors and Garment Workers	39	42	57	80
Woolcombers	39	40	60	42
Electrical Trades	61	56	61	55
Railwaymen	36	46	44	38
Yorkshire Miners	41	28	23	13
Railway Clerks	41	65	63	49
Aluminate Engineers	17	19	18	19
Locomotive Engineers	54	44	37	46
Average of all above Unions	39.0	41.5	45.8	46.3
Average, omitting Unions with over 10% decline in income, 1920-21				37.4
Percentage of Expenses to Premium Income of the 15 leading Insurance Companies in 1921				42.9

It will be seen from this table that in spite of the growing burden of negotiation and collective bargaining, the increase in the percentage of income from members spent by the ten Unions on all that is comprised under the head of management has been relatively trifling during the past four years. The present figure scarcely exceeds the percentage of expenses to premium income shown by the fifteen leading insurance companies. When allowance is made for the enormous variety of the work necessary and peculiar to Trade Unions, the moral of the above figures is that even as benefit societies Trade Unions compare most favourably in point of economy of management with the principal commercial insurance concerns in the country.

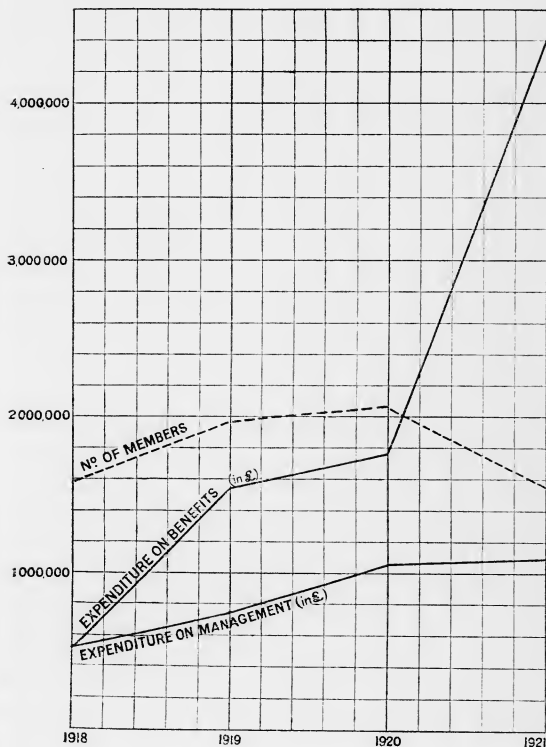
Moreover, the figures for 1921 are in certain cases not strictly comparable with those for the earlier years. Most of the Unions in the above table had larger incomes from members in 1921 than in 1920, but in three cases—the Agricultural Workers, the Workers' Union and the Garment Workers—a substantial decline in income was recorded in 1921, amounting to 16%, 18% and 35% respectively. As already explained, it is impossible at once to contract the "Management" expenses of Trade Unions to meet declining membership or declining income. These three Unions, therefore, although their actual management expenditure remained on the average practically constant (the exact figure is an average decrease of 1%), found that this outlay absorbed in 1921 an exceptionally large proportion of their diminished income. It is this which explains this relatively high proportion of management expenses to income in 1921. It will be noticed that the figure of 80% in the case of the Garment Workers is fully explained by the fact that this Union in 1921 lost over a third of its 1920 income. Its *actual* management expenses were 12% less in 1921 than in 1920.

If the three Unions which suffered loss of income of over 10% be withdrawn from the above table it will be seen that the average percentage of income from members spent on management of the remaining Unions, which afford a fairer basis of comparison, is 37.4. This figure is less than the average for any other year in the table, and is actually below the percentage of premium income absorbed by expenses in the insurance companies in the same year.

Conclusion

The second attack of the *Morning Post*, like its predecessor, is based on misrepresentation and falsification. It leaves unaffected the conclusions already drawn as to purpose and the true character of the *Morning Post's* friendship to Trade Unionism.

GRAPH SHOWING AGGREGATE MEMBERSHIP, MANAGEMENT EXPENDITURE, AND EXPENDITURE UPON BENEFITS OF THE TEN UNIONS INVESTIGATED BY THE "MORNING POST," 1918-1921.



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